

### **How do I report a violation?**

There are several ways to report a violation.

- Call the Neighborhood Preservation Section at (626) 384-5470 and leave a message for an Officer to return your call when they have returned from their daily field operations. If you wish to remain anonymous, please leave a detailed message that includes the address of the property in question.
- Or, visit City Hall and submit a written complaint with the staff at the Building and Planning counter.
- Or, E-mail your complaint to [info@covina.gov](mailto:info@covina.gov).

### **What type of complaints are considered property maintenance issues?**

Property maintenance complaints may include but are not limited to:

- Building partially destroyed or left partially constructed.
- Open entryway (doors, windows, etc.) of a vacant structure not closed and maintained securely.
- Overgrown, dead, or decayed weeds and vegetation.
- Any exterior, wall, fence, driveway, sidewalk, etc., left in a state that would be unsafe or that is not in line with neighborhood standards.
- Attractive nuisance to children (i.e. pool, machinery or equipment).
- Construction equipment/machinery parked in public view.
- Lumber, junk, trash and debris visible from public right-of-way.
- Any motor vehicle or other mobile equipment parked on an unpaved surface in front or side yard.

### **Do I have to give you my name and telephone number?**

No, but it helps in the event that we need to contact you to clarify an address or ask you a question pertaining to the complaint you have filed. It also allows us to notify you in the event that the property violation is already active in our database or if the complaint is out of our jurisdiction and to be referred to another department. If you do choose to leave your name and telephone number, it is kept confidential and can only be release through a court subpoena.

### **I've made my complaint, how long do I have to wait before I see something being done?**

After your complaint has been received, the average time to investigate is one (1) to three (3) working days for a Neighborhood Preservation Officer to visit, document and determine if a violation exists. We respond to each complaint as soon as it is filed as each and every complaint is important to us. Complaints are prioritized according to potential health and safety hazard. Once a complaint is investigated and verified, the property owner is notified and a process begins to abate the violations. The process of abatement may last days, weeks or months; depending on the severity of the violations, the circumstances surrounding the property, and the due process and property rights that are guaranteed to all citizens. It may appear to an outside observer that no action is occurring or that action does not occur on a timeline that satisfies the complainant, however it should be considered that the due process

rights and property rights of all citizens are respected and that voluntary compliance is a process that resembles a partnership between the City and property owners - it is not a process to penalize violators or to retaliate against difficult neighbors.

### **What do I do if I receive a "Notice of Violation" or a "Stop Work Notice"?**

Each circumstance is different and therefore there is no one answer that will apply to every situation; however, Neighborhood Preservation staff is available and willing to discuss any notification which you may have received.

### **Who turned me in?**

We receive complaints from a number of sources including internal referrals, outside agencies and the general public. ***Complainant information is confidential and can only be revealed through a court subpoena.***

### **My neighbors have violations, too. Why aren't you investigating them?**

All complaints are investigated. If you believe that there is a code violation on another property, you may contact Neighborhood Preservation staff and provide this information. The complaint will be investigated appropriately. If a violation is found to exist, the owner will be contacted and required to remove the violation and/or obtain the necessary permits for the violation. It will not be apparent to an outside observer what actions occur regarding a violation, and Neighborhood Preservation Officers only respond to complaints. The Code Enforcement process is not proactive, in other words, Officers do not go looking for violations in neighborhoods. The Code Enforcement process is intended to be reactive, in other words, we respond to complaints that are reported. It is not the intent of the City Council that Officers should blanket neighborhoods with violations in a proactive manner. The Officers are dedicated to responding to complaints from citizens, and will only react when a violation is brought to their attention by a citizen.

### **How much will the permits cost to clear the violations?**

Permit fees vary depending on the complexity of the project. Staff at the Permit Counter will assist you in determining your cost.

### **What do I need to do to clear the violation?**

If no permit is required, simply cease the illegal activity and call the assigned Neighborhood Preservation Officer to schedule an inspection. If a permit is required you must obtain a permit through the appropriate Department. The permit must be approved; all permit and Neighborhood Preservation fees must be paid; the permit must be issued; and, a final inspection must be scheduled to sign off the permit before the violation is cleared. Most violations are simple matters and are cleared quickly after a single telephone conversation with a Neighborhood Preservation Officer. The Officer will detail what actions need to be taken to clear the violation, and will work with citizens to set up abatement schedules that are reasonable and appropriate.

### **How much time do I have to clear the violations?**

In most cases you are given 30 days to either abate the violation or apply for permits to abate the violation; however, the time frame is at the Neighborhood Preservation Officer's discretion depending on the severity of the violation. Violations that endanger health and safety are placed in a special category that require immediate action.

